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AUTHOR Kazlow, Carole; Lachman, Susan
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ABSTRACT

This report is an evaluation of a Title VII Bilingual Program conducted in two New York junior high schools in 1979-1980 for Spanish speaking and Haitian students. A program description outlines the methods used for selecting students for the bilingual program. A discussion of the evaluation's design and objectives is also included. The evaluation considered the following aspects of the program: (1) room and materials; (2) general pedagogy; (3) language use; (4) bicultural aspects; (5) parental involvement; (6) staff development; and (7) curriculum development. The report presents student tests scores in Spanish and English reading achievement. It concludes with recommendations regarding testing, staff, bicultural activities, truancy, and student placement. (APM)

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FINAL EVALUATION

DISTRICT 13 HAITIAN-SPANISH BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Funded under ESEA Title VII

Project Period: July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1980

Grant Number G007700587

Submitted by:

Carole Kazlow, Ph.D.

Susan Lachman

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The 1979-80 District 13 Haitian-Spanish Bilingual program (Grant No. G007700587) is the third year of a Bilingual Education program funded under ESEA Title VII. The program operates in two public junior high schools in District 13 - J.H.S. 294 and I.S. 117. The Junior High School Bilingual Program is an intervention program designed to service students whose first language is not English.

The aim of the program is to improve the English language competence of the students so that their school performance will be comparable to that of their English-speaking peers. The program employs the child's native tongue (Creole or Spanish) as a medium of subject matter instruction, while he/she is being helped to learn English. By enabling students to master cognitive skills in the language they know best, before making the transition to English, bilingual classes are designed to prevent or minimize academic retardation.

A secondary aim of the program is to enhance and maintain a child's proficiency in his native language. Teachers are expected to draw on a child's heritage and culture as a means of building self-esteem and motivation to learn.

Two hundred twenty-one students were enrolled in the Title VII program during the 1979-80 school year. Admission and discharge figures indicate that at least forty students were exposed to the program for less than the full year.

The New York City Board of Education Language Assessment Battery

(LAB) is used to determine program eligibility. The twentieth percentile mark is the cut-off for placement in the Bilingual program. Data for the Spring administration of this instrument indicates that of the 155 students who were tested, 123 or 79.3% were below the twentieth percentile. Therefore, at least 55.6% of those enrolled in the program are known to be below the twentieth percentile. The figure may be higher due to missing data.

Test scores on the Spring administration of the Spanish version of the LAB are available for 119 Spanish-dominant students. Of these 119 scores, 40 were below the twentieth percentile. Thus, 36.9% of those tested lack Spanish language competence as defined by the LAB test.

The Title VII program staff consisted of a Director, Assistant Director, two Resource Teachers, a Teacher Trainer, a Community Relations Teacher, a Curriculum Specialist, a Bilingual Guidance Counselor, two Family Assistants and two Educational Assistants. The staff also included eight full-time tax-levy Bilingual classroom teachers.

The program at I.S. 117 consisted of five Bilingual Spanish classes, (three 7th grade and two 8th grade) and the J.H.S. 294 program consisted of two multigraded Spanish classes and one multigraded (7 - 8 - 9) Haitian-Creole class.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation effort follows the same format in 1979-80 as it has in the past two years. It consists of both a process evaluation and a product evaluation.

The process evaluation calls for systematic classroom observation and an on-going analysis of the program's direction and progress. The evaluators discuss their findings periodically with the Program Director. This aspect of the evaluation is designed to enable the Director and his staff to assess goals and objectives, identify strengths and weaknesses and expand upon effective modalities.

As a result of these discussions, the direction of the Junior High School Bilingual program with reference to ESL instruction was changed. In 1979-80, small, homogeneous groups were formed for ESL instruction at both schools. Two highly qualified and effective teachers implemented the program.

In 1980-81, the Bilingual program is to be combined and housed in one building (I.S. 117) and it is hoped that it will result in greater coordination and efficiency. Departmentalization and individualized instruction should be a real possibility with this consolidation.

The product evaluation was designed to assess the impact of the program on the pupils' achievement. The evaluation of this aspect of the program refers to the following objectives:

1. Native Language Reading Achievement. By the end of the pro-

gram year, pupils will exhibit a statistically significant mean gain in Native Language Reading scores. For Spanish-dominant students, this will be measured by the Inter-American Series Prueba de Lectura and by a program-developed or commercially prepared Creole reading test for Haitian students.

2. English Language Arts Achievement (Reading). Given a program of instruction in English, Bilingual students will show a significant mean gain in English language reading as measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test in Reading.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The evaluators made four rounds of visits to the two schools. Each visit was followed by a discussion with the Resource Teacher, the Teacher Trainer, and other program staff. The findings described below are based on these observations and follow-up discussions.

Instructional Component

Physical Setting and Materials

The Bilingual classes meet in regular-sized classrooms with flexible seating arrangements. However, the seats are never moved and the seating pattern is strictly traditional. The evaluators observed classes that typically contained ten to fifteen students. (This was accounted for by low attendance rates and the provision of additional services on a pull-out basis). Small class size did not influence seating arrangements or instructional strategies.

The rooms vary in terms of their attractiveness. Some have updated displays of student work, educational charts and posters. However, many classrooms can be characterized as drab. The boards and displays are either empty or sloppy. The tone which emerges in these cases is negative.

The Bilingual Resource rooms contain an array of materials. During our visits, we did not observe these materials in classroom

use. Generally the teachers in the program do not appear to use a wide variety of materials and/or techniques. This problem was noted in last year's report and remains as a problem to be overcome in the future. It points to the need for clarifying the role of the Resource Teacher in coordinating materials with curricula.

General Pedagogy

Lessons observed continue to be teacher-dominated and for the most part geared to intact classes. Discipline is not a major problem for most teachers. There are some exceptions. In these cases, the noise level is so high, an observer could not hear the teacher talking.

Several areas of general pedagogy demand immediate attention: upgrading teachers' subject matter knowledge, improving techniques of lesson planning, questioning skills, and implementing classroom routines.

In several instances, teachers were misinformed and presented erroneous information to their students. In the Social Studies and English classes at I.S. 117, teachers were observed repeatedly accepting an incorrect answer without comment.

The most technically proficient teachers appear to be in the ESL component of the program. In both schools, these teachers are well organized and present fully-developed lessons. Students participate and are involved. There is apparently a good relationship between the students and the teacher.

The problem of upgrading the general pedagogical skills of the teachers was exacerbated by the fact that the teacher trainer was

not present for the first three months of the school year. In addition, she had to divide her time between the two settings.

Language Use

Last year, the evaluators noted three distinct patterns of language use in the Junior High School classrooms. This year, there has been some improvement in that a definite pattern established by the project Director is being implemented. Students are being taught in their native language and code-switching is kept to a minimum.

Several language use problems persist. Students are characterized by heterogeneity of language skills and differential exposure to a formal program of Bilingual instruction. Many, if not most of the Hispanic students are native New Yorkers, however, there is a significant number of new arrivals. The language skills of the two groups differ and indicate a need for a reappraisal of the language strategies.

Bicultural Aspect

The Bilingual classrooms are frequently decorated with posters and/or maps of the children's native countries. This cultural aspect of the program continues to focus on the formal observation of holidays. As in the past, we did not observe teachers incorporating the bicultural theme in their lessons.

Parental Involvement

The Family Assistants are responsible for maintaining contact with the students' families. In 1979-80, they made home visits to those students who were continually absent or who presented discipline problems in the classroom. Chronic truancy (average attendance

at I.S. 117 was 145 days; at J.H.S. 294, 151) is a continuing problem which the Family Assistant appears unable to resolve. While no special programs were implemented in the Junior High Schools to enlist parental involvement, parents felt free to call the schools and check on their children's progress. The Family Assistant, on occasion, has accompanied parents to clinic appointments.

Staff Development

The Teacher Trainer and other District Staff members have been working directly with the classroom teachers in the school setting. In some instances, specific pedagogical skills have been upgraded. However, there are a few teachers for whom this training has not been effective.

The Bilingual staff development emphasis in 1979-80 has focused on ESL. The program sponsored an ESL training workshop at the District Office. Several teachers have chosen to develop their ESL competence by enrolling in a college course at Long Island University. The program paid the tuition.

Curriculum Development

The Haitian-Creole component has been using a level 2 book, Timoun Yo Ap Li, developed by the District staff. It consists of stories, proverbs and riddles in Creole. Social Studies curricula materials in Creole are presently being developed.

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

In order to ascertain the impact of the Bilingual program on the students, scores from the Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) and the Inter-American Series, Prueba de Lectura were subjected to statistical analysis.

In the 1978-79 Final Report, the evaluators recommended that achievement tests in other subject areas be developed or selected. This recommendation has not yet been implemented. It is also unfortunate that no measure of Creole language competence was administered on a pre-post basis to the Haitian students. The range of student achievement subjected to statistical analysis is therefore limited.

Appropriate levels of the pretests were administered in November 1979. In May 1980, posttest scores were obtained. Two hundred twenty-one students were enrolled in the program at the two schools. There were 134 Spanish-dominant students in five classes at I.S. 117. At J.H.S. 294, there was one Haitian Creole class which consisted of 26 students (three seventh-grade students, eight eighth-graders and fifteen ninth-grade students) and sixty-one Spanish-dominant students.

The test data and analyses presented below are based on scores for less than the total population. Matched pre and post test scores for the Metropolitan Achievement Test were submitted for 143 students. This represents 64% of the eligible population. One hundred and ten matched scores were reported for the Spanish language reading test. This represents 56% of the eligible Spanish-

dominant students.

This low response rate is a matter of some concern. The tested group may differ significantly from the group that was not tested. Thus the analyses presented below may or may not be representative of the achievement pattern of the population being served.

The statistical analyses used were t tests for correlated means. On the Metropolitan Achievement Test comparisons were made between actual posttest scores and predicted posttests. Predicted posttest scores were derived using the New York State Historical Regression formula. These scores represent an estimate of the students' expected posttest scores had there been no program intervention, (i.e., Bilingual program). They are based on past rates of achievement. If the t test values are significant, it indicates that actual gains are significantly different from expected rates of achievement.

This type of statistical comparison is presented in lieu of control group comparisons. It should be noted that the Historical Regression formula depends upon the use of grade equivalent scores. There are several statistical and interpretive problems associated with the use of these scores, and they may present an insensitive or distorted picture of the project's impact. The formula was used so as to adhere to the program proposal.

Reading Achievement in Spanish

One of the objectives of the Bilingual program is to improve the native language reading skills of the students. The test used

to measure these skills for Spanish language reading was the Inter-American Series, Prueba de Lectura. Normative data and grade equivalents are not available for this instrument. The t tests reported in Table 1 compare pre and posttest levels of achievement.

The data demonstrates lack of statistically significant growth in Spanish reading as measured by this instrument. In grades 8 and 9, student mean scores were lower on the posttest than on the pretest. This lack of significant growth in Spanish language reading may be associated with the linguistic heterogeneity of the students, problems in test administration or lack of compatability between the Spanish Language Arts curriculum and the test.

Reading Achievement in English

Student achievement in English language reading was measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test. As Table 2 indicates, students in grades 7, 8, and 9 scored higher in English language reading achievement at the end of the year than at the beginning. The difference between the actual posttest score and the predicted score (Historical Regression formula) was statistically significant for eighth-grade students.

TABLE 1

Spanish Language Achievement (*Prueba de Lectura* Raw Scores, Means, Standard Deviations, *t* Tests)

Grade	N	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Probability
7	39	30.2 (20.1)	33.5 (14.1)	n.s.
8	58	40.3 (19.5)	31.3 (17.9)	n.s.
9	13	57.6 (28.9)	51.2 (24.1)	n.s.

TABLE 2

English Reading Achievement by Grade (*Metropolitan Achievement Test* Grade Equivalents, Means, Standard Deviations, *t* Values)

Grade	N	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Predicted Posttest Mean (SD)	*t* Value
7	44	3.87 (1.56)	3.80 (1.61)	4.20 (1.74)	- 1.37
8	73	3.86 (1.68)	4.62 (1.90)	4.15 (1.85)	4.18***
9	26	4.52 (2.31)	4.87 (1.95)	4.83 (2.51)	.13

*** Significant at .001 level

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Testing

1. The Program Director should develop and implement a comprehensive testing policy for the Program. This should include an orientation to all program personnel on administering, scoring and interpreting test data. Standardized record keeping should be instituted.
2. Pretests should be administered during the first month of the school year.
3. It is important that measures of achievement in subjects other than English and Spanish reading be developed or selected for inclusion in program evaluation.
4. In order to obtain an accurate assessment of student achievement, all students should be accounted for in the testing program.

II. Title VII Staff

In order to obtain the optimal impact from the Title VII staff (i.e., Resource Teacher, Teacher Trainer, Curriculum Specialist and Community Relations Teacher), the roles must be defined clearly, the responsibilities coordinated and the performances monitored. The proposed consolidation of the program into one site can facilitate this task. Furthermore, the program must be integrated into the total school setting, especially with reference to instructional

supervision.

III. Truancy

In some classes, chronic truancy is a serious problem which inhibits program functioning and limits student achievement. Stronger, more direct procedures for overcoming this problem are necessary. Parents must be made aware of the importance of regular school attendance. There is sufficient staff to deal with this problem and it should become a priority for the coming year.

IV. Staff Development

There is a need for a staff development program that incorporates general educational techniques as well as bilingual teaching strategies. Teachers should be encouraged to attend appropriate workshops and enroll in courses that will directly enhance their classroom skills.

V. Bicultural

The Bicultural aspect of the program should be expanded beyond the obvious holiday observances. The population being served is, in effect, multicultural. Aside from Haitian and Puerto Rican Hispanic populations, many Spanish-speaking students come from countries in Central and South America. Their cultural heritage and experiences should be an integral part of the day-to-day curricula.

VI. Student Placement

At least 25% of the Spanish-speaking population scored below the twentieth percentile on the Spanish version of the LAB test. The needs of these students differ from those whose formal reading skills in Spanish are more developed. Alternate strategies for dealing with these students should be designed. Provision must be made for testing and placing those children whose academic achievement is limited by factors other than language (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional problems, etc.).